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ABSTRACT

After a 1977 Banff Conference on "Clinical Approaches to Work with Families" in June, 1977, approximately one-third of the 134 participants were surveyed or interviewed to determine their evaluation of the conference and their perceptions of future education, training, and resource needs findings were made: (1) the 1977 Banff Conference would appear to have met its goals, and a large proportion of the participants would recommend it for the future; however, the function of a future conference is not clear, while the functions of knowledge dissemination and coordination of information sharing among regions are promising; (2) one of the most critical needs identified is that of coordination of information and activities at the local level as it relates to family work; (3) another most significant need is in-depth training at the local level, with opportunities for a variety of subject matter and approaches related to family practice; and (4) strong interest was shown in an interprovincial network of some kind, the nature of which should be more fully explored in further research. The participants concluded that the Banff Conference had made a significant contribution to the process of service to families and support for family workers. (The conference program and the survey questionnaire are included in the appendix to this report.) (KC)

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Education, Training and Resources for Family Workers in Western Canada: A Follow-up Study of the 1977 Banff Conference on "Clinical Approaches to Work with Families"

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May 15, 1978

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Karl Tomm, Jack Kirley, Margaret Carlson, Peg Peters, Rod Tomlinson, and Peggy Rodway provided necessary advice and criticism of the survey approach and the final report in their capacity as Advisory Committee members. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report, while repleting the criticism of the advisory group, must of course remain with the writer.

Stephanie McLeod appeared on the scene just when she was needed, and took on the onerous data processing and first draft preparation tasks. Karen McDermid cheerfully typed numerous drafts, and the end product.

Thirty-six conference participants willingly took part in the initial interviews and thus shaped the final survey instrument; and 96 participants diligently completed a long, tedious questionnaire and returned it promptly. Thirty-three participants attended the local meetings together with 19 additional visitors.

Alan Douglas, Grants Directorate Consultant, not only assisted in liaison capacity, but contributed greatly by pointing to the need for increased participant involvement in such a study.

I sincerely hope, despite the necessity of abbreviation in a report such as this, that I have accurately reflected your views and your helpful comments in this report. I am grateful for your effort and support. I hope I can call this our report.

H.K. ("Morris") Baskett

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report of a follow-up study of participants attending the 1977 Banff Conference entitled "Clinical Approaches to Work With Families", June, 1977 at Banff, Alberta.

The report examines: a) participants' evaluation of the Conference; b) future education, training and resource needs as seen by those attending the Conference. Because the conference attendees were self selecting, they cannot be seen as representative of the population of "family workers" in Western Canada. It is hoped, however, that important issues relating to education, training and resources for family work in Western Canada are raised, and that directions for further study are suggested.

II. THE 1977 CONFERENCE

Because the study is based on those attending the 1977 Conference, a brief description of the background and goals of that Conference are in order.

The concept of the conference arose from discussions amongst faculty members of the School of Social Work of the University of British Columbia, the Faculty of Social Welfare of the University of Calgary, and the Faculty of Social Work, the University of Regina. The assumption of the need for such a conference was based primarily on informal data received by the initiators - who had been involved in Continuing Education programs in family therapy and other similar activities.

Four major conference goals were developed at the first meeting of the planning committee: 1) to provide participants with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the available approaches and theories related to work with families; 2) to provide opportunities for participants to understand differences between selected approaches as well as similarities and points of integration; 3) to increase the awareness and understanding of participants of innovative field practices in work with families; 4) and to develop a dialogue and increase interaction amongst practitioners, supervisors and teachers involved in family practice in Western Canada with the view of improving resource sharing and building regional competencies.

One hundred and thirty one participants and nineteen resource persons attended the Conference. (See Appendix A, Conference Program Outline.)

III. STUDY GOALS AND METHODS

Final agreement from National Health and Welfare Canada to support an evaluation was obtained in June of 1977. With limited lead time a decision was taken to interview approximately one-third of the participants in order to obtain a clearer view of the directions an evaluative study should take.

During the Fall of 1977, attention was given to developing an adequate strategy to meet revised terms of reference and to comply with the explicit request by National Health and Welfare for increased practitioner involvement in the evaluation process.

The final objectives and methodology, which attempted to reflect discussions with National Health and Welfare and with a Project Advisory Committee, were as follows:

1) To evaluate the contribution of the 1977 Banff Conference on "Clinical Approaches to Work With Families" in meeting the educational needs of practitioners working in the family therapy field. Specifically, to evaluate the effects of the Conference on: a) the provision of services to families in need,
   b) the knowledge of practitioners in the field,
   c) the development of a network of information and consultation for practitioners.
2) To identify current and future needs for consultation, training, knowledge and other resources for those involved in family practice in Western Canada.

The proposed evaluation design incorporated the following components:

a) preliminary interviews with 36 of the 131 participants at the Banff Conference to identify major areas of concern in preparation for a more extensive mailout questionnaire.
b) preparation of the questionnaire, in consultation with a a Project Advisory Committee and members of the planning committee for the 1977 and 1978 Conferences.
c) mailout of the finalized questionnaire.
d) meetings with participants of the 1977 Conference in seven centers in Western Canada in which approximately 79% of the participants of the 1977 Conference resided. (In actuality, 6 centers were visited.)

e) circulation of a preliminary draft report to the advisory committee and to various key persons for comment and revision.

f) submission of the final draft to National Health and Welfare, Deans of participating Schools and Faculties, key agencies, professional groups, and others who requested copies.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Two means of obtaining information were used in the study; group meetings with participants, and a mail-out survey instrument. The data thus obtained are reported separately below.

A. GROUP MEETINGS

Seventy-nine per cent of those attending the 1977 Conference resided in 7 urban areas: Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Lethbridge, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. As part of the project design, meetings were planned for each of these urban areas. Due to time, Lethbridge was not visited. The meetings, which included those who attended the 1977 conference, and others who were interested in education, training and resources for supporting family work, had two prime goals:

a) to provide a more rounded view of the ideas and feelings of participants about the conference and to obtain a better grasp of the implications of the data which would not be possible through the questionnaire method.

b) to use the meeting as a vehicle for encouraging examination of local needs for education, training and resources in family work by local practitioners.

Table 1 displays the attendance at the meetings in the 6 centers visited. Attendance ranged from a high of sixty-six per cent to a low of ten per cent. "Visitors" included all those attending the group meetings who had not been a participant at the Banff Conference, but who were interested in the field of education and training for family work. In three meetings faculty members of Schools of Social Work in the particular city attended as visitors as well.

On the average, one-third of the possible number of conference participants attended the field meetings.

Table 1

Attendance at Local Meetings of Participants

City	Possible Attendance	No. of '77 Conference Participants Attending Group Meetings	% Attending of Possible	No. of Visitors
Victoria	9	6	66% *	5
Vancouver	28	11 (plus 2 regrets)	39%	1
Calgary	24	5	21%	2
Edmonton	20	7	35%	2
Winnipeg	10	1 (plus 1 regret)	10%	5
Saskatoon	7	3 (plus 2 regrets)	42%	4
Totals	98 or 75% of total conference participants	33 or 34% of possible attendance		19

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* Throughout this report, percentages have been rounded to the nearest full number.

Those attending the group meeting in each city were asked to comment on two aspects:

a) major recommendations or comments they had regarding the conference itself

b) ideas and recommendations (which would help improve the the effectiveness of education, training and resources for family workers in their local area) which should be included in a final report.

(1) Comments about the Conference

Comments about the conference tended to be idiosyncratic, with no clear pattern except for one point. Mention was made in all meetings, except one, that the location of the conference should circulate and not always be held at Banff. It was pointed out that both in British Columbia and in Saskatchewan, governments have a policy of restricting out-of-province conferences and educational activities, thus creating a hardship on those having to travel to Banff. If the conference location were rotated so that it was held in each province every four years, opportunities to take advantage of it would be much greater.

Other comments about the conference which were made in at least two different meetings are listed below:

- the instruction was too theoretical in nature and did not have sufficient emphasis on skills and "experiential" learning
- those attending the workshops had too diverse a range of experience and education and those with advanced knowledge and

experience were held back from pursuing matters in depth;

- the instructors were only from Western Canada and at least some should be "name" instructors from elsewhere;
- more opportunities to meet other professionals and to share information is required.

(2) Comments About Local Needs

Two subjects consistently received large amounts of time in the discussions at the six field meetings: education and training for family workers; and coordination and communications amongst practitioners. These are discussed separately below.

(a) Education and Training for Family Workers

Opportunities for systematic, in-depth education and training in various aspects of work with families was seen as an important need in all of the communities visited. In many cases, references were made to already existing training programs but dissatisfaction was expressed that these programs were not responsive to the needs of the practitioners, emphasized one approach only, or were part of a degree program and thus made extraneous demands on the practitioners which the practitioners were unwilling to meet.

In three of the meetings, reference was made to in-service education programs carried out by agencies (usually government agencies) which, while being potentially valuable to practitioners in the private sector, were generally not available. Further, comments were heard quite often that sponsoring agencies did not make a point of inviting non-agency practitioners to courses and in-service events involving visiting specialists.

In two cases reference was made to the problems of using the short term "visiting lecturer" approach which neither ensured in-depth learning nor addressed the issue as to whether the person was competent to practice after attending the lecture. Most people were of the opinion that a more systematic approach to education and training was required in their community which would replace the present ad-hoc system. In two meetings comments were made to the effect that there was little variety in the programs which were offered and that practitioners did not have a range of choices as to approach or subject matter in family work.

Reference was made in three meetings to the need for a variety of levels of education and training. In two or three informal conversations, workers expressed a need for training of practitioners to understand the applications and problems of a variety of theories, approaches and methodologies before choosing to take training in a specific approach.

In two of the field meetings, frustration was expressed by the participants that while resources for education and training existed in their community, the means of equitably releasing these resources for ongoing education and training of all practitioners in family work was difficult, if not impossible. Practitioners cited instances where very competent teachers worked for universities and governments, but were unable to teach in the community because of lack of finances or agency policies. The impression received was that often there were sufficient resources available in the communities to provide a good educational program, but the problem was in overcoming various senses of propriety that organizations, agencies, etc. had over their

personnel and the inability to share this personnel with other sectors of the community.

The function of in-depth workshops, internships and other intensive programs was seen not only serving skills development and educational purposes, but in four instances was referred to as an opportunity to share frustrations, re-new oneself, or avoid the "burn out" that often occurs in the helping professions. The opportunity, either in seminars or in informal meetings, to receive support and discuss in a non-judgmental setting particular professional problems one meets, was mentioned in three meetings as being extremely valuable but lacking in the community.

A caution was raised in one group meeting that the emphasis placed on training for family work could focus entirely on clinical skills and theory and ignore the total context in which family work functions.

In four meetings, universities were pointed at for a variety of evils, including their inflexibility to meet the learning needs of the practitising community, or their propensity to deliver only specific theories or approaches in family work. In two such meetings university related persons pointed out the problems that universities have in interfacing with community practice needs and urged local groups to clearly identify their needs and to learn how to systematically demand these from educational institutions such as universities. In one such meeting it was pointed out that there are other means of education and training than through formal educational institutions and that it was quite possible for a consortium of agencies to develop their own training programs.

In Saskatoon the matter of education did not seem to be as intensive an issue during the discussions as elsewhere. It would appear to the writer that because of the size of the city, communications were much easier and the practise community seemed to be more in touch with the various services and events in the community. It seemed that family work as a separate field of practice had not received as much emphasis in this city as in some of the larger cities, and consequently had not yet arisen as a territorial or boundary issue.

In Vancouver action had already begun by a group of practitioners from a variety of disciplines to investigate a possible institute or other means for coordination and training in family work. The group meeting in this city was carried out in conjunction with that group of workers and communications since the meeting would suggest this action helped reinforce the practise community in backing such an enterprize.

In Edmonton, the group meeting was used to launch a city-wide meeting of family workers, spearheaded by staff of the Edmonton Board of Health who had been investigating the need for better coordination and education in the family work field.

(b) Information and Communications

Keeping up to date as to training events, services and other family therapy activities in the local community was also a high priority item and considerable time and intensity were devoted to this topic in all community meetings. Communication, information flow, and inter-agency cooperation was seen as either spotty or non-existent.

In five of the meetings, recommendations were made for creating a coordinating and information-sharing body of some kind. In two cases it was suggested that the universities might serve in this capacity but more often the discussion was focused on the need for a new structure which would cross disciplinary and professional boundaries as well as agency boundaries. Quite regularly, people commented that the field of family work is a new and emerging field and is not the creature of a particular agency, university department or profession. In fact, several times strong fears were expressed that a particular discipline might "capture" family work as its domain and thus reduce the effectiveness of this multi-disciplinary and inter-professional field of work.

Debate occurred in several of the meetings around the need for clarity as to the nature of family practice, family work, family therapy and other similar descriptions relating to intervention with families. Furthermore, fears were expressed that the term family work was being used by a variety of departments and agencies as a "cover up" for individual practice or for a poor quality program. Cases were cited where government departments were claiming they were carrying out family work, when in fact no changes in practice had occurred and the change in terms appeared to be primarily a public relations move. One other fear expressed by two or three individuals in two separate meetings was that "family work" was becoming used as a panacea for all ills and that some unsophisticated practitioners were unthinkingly assuming that every situation required a "family approach".

In two meetings participants expressed a concern that the need for information sharing and coordination could lead to the creation of yet

another professional body or group which would compete for scarce resources and loyalties. Some people suggested that an already existing group such as a social planning council or a community information directorate may better serve the information coordinating function than a new group. On the other hand, as expressed earlier, many people were of the opinion that the existing structures were insufficient and that new structures were necessary.

Evidence that there is some action in the coordination area was obtained through the meetings. Reference was made to an attempt in Alberta to organize a chapter of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counsellors. Mention was made that the University of Alberta has proposed a program in the Family Life Education and Family Counselling area. In Vancouver the aforementioned informal committee on developing an institute has been active over the past year and a half, and some informal meetings appear to be occurring in Edmonton.

The need for some kind of newsletter or other written means of communication of events in the local community was raised at two meetings. In both cases the concern was expressed that, while this was an important need, resources for providing a continuous support to a newsletter were very limited.

While the focus of the meetings was not on the direct delivery of family services, in three meetings concerns were raised by those attending about the uncoordinated means of delivery of services for families, and that there appeared to be overlapping services and competition for families amongst agencies. It was suggested that the very nature of the structure

of agencies and their specializations ran counter to the needs of various types of family units which were seeking assistance from the community. In a sense, these concerns run parallel with similar concerns, as expressed earlier in this section that existing professional groups are not adaptable to the needs of families for "multi-professional" workers.

B. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This section reports the data collected through the questionnaires sent to the Family Therapy Conference participants (see Appendix B). It is presented in three parts: demographic data on the respondents; respondent evaluation of the 1977 Conference; and evaluation of the support, education and resource systems available to family workers.

(1) A Profile of the Respondents

Questionnaires were mailed to all 131 Conference participants, and while 96 questionnaires were returned, only 93 were available in time for analysis. The data in this report are thus based on 71% of the population of the Conference participants.

(a) Sex

Fifty-seven percent of the participants were female and 43.0% were male.

(b) Profession

Table 2 indicates the professions of the participants. Slightly over half of the participants gave Social Work as their profession. The large number under 'other' tended to be job titles rather than a profession, and fell into no obvious

Table 2

Profession of Respondents
(N = 93)

Profession	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Social Worker	52	56
Other	23	25
Psychologist	8	9
Nurse	5	5
School Counsellor	2	2
Teacher	1	1
Student	1	1
Psychologist & School Counsellor	1	1
Total	93	100

categories. Answers ranged from Agency Administrator to Child Care Worker. Eleven of the 23 titles given under 'other' contained the word 'family'.

(c) Education

Data in Table 3 shows that the majority (82%) of the participants have at least one university degree. The largest single category (57%) has a Masters degree and 5% hold doctorates.

Table 3

Highest Education Achievement of Conference Respondents
(N = 93)

Education	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Masters Degree	53	57
Bachelor's Degree	21	23
Doctorate	5	5
2 Yrs. College Training	5	5
Other	4	4
Some University	3	3
High School	1	1
R.N.	1	1
Total	93	100%

(d) Employer

Table 4 indicates that 55% are employed in public agencies, while only 16% are from private agencies. Information was not readily available to suggest whether or not the ratio of public to private agency employees reflects the distribution in the community.

Table 4

Employers of Respondents
(N = 93)

Employer	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Public Agency	51	55
Private Agency	15	16
Other	11	12
University	10	11
College	2	2
Not Employed	2	2
Self-Employed	1	1
No Answer	1	1
Total	93	100%

(e) Work Location

Table 5 lists the location in which the respondents do most of their work.

Table 5

Location in which Respondents Work

Urban Centres	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Calgary	19	20
Edmonton	16	17
Vancouver	14	15
Winnipeg	8	9
Victoria	6	7
Lethbridge	5	5
Saskatoon	4	4
Regina	3	3
Ottawa	2	2
Sub-totals	77	83%
Rural Centres in 4 Western Provinces		
B.C.	5	6
Alberta	3	3
Saskatchewan	3	3
Manitoba	2	2
Sub-totals	13	14%
Other Areas		
Ontario, (London)	1	1
New Brunswick, (Fredericton)	1	1
Montana, (Great Falls)	1	1
Sub-totals	3	3%
Totals	93	100%

The majority (86%) of the respondents are from fairly large urban areas. Eighty-three percent of them work in urban areas in the western provinces (B.C. to Manitoba). By province, Alberta had the highest representation (46%), followed by B.C. (27%) and Manitoba (11%).

(f) Experience in Work with Families

Table 6 shows the number of years participants have worked professionally with families. Over half (57%) have worked professionally with families for five or more years, and 77% have worked with families three or more years. At the same time, almost one quarter have had from 0 - 2 years experience, suggesting that there is an important group just beginning or interested but not active in family work who attended the conference.

Table 6

Number of Years Respondents have Worked with Families
(N = 93)

Number of Years	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
0	6	7
1-2	17	18
3-4	19	20
5-6	22	24
7-8	7	8
9-10	9	10
11-12	1	1
13-14	6	7
15 or more	6	7
Totals	93	100%

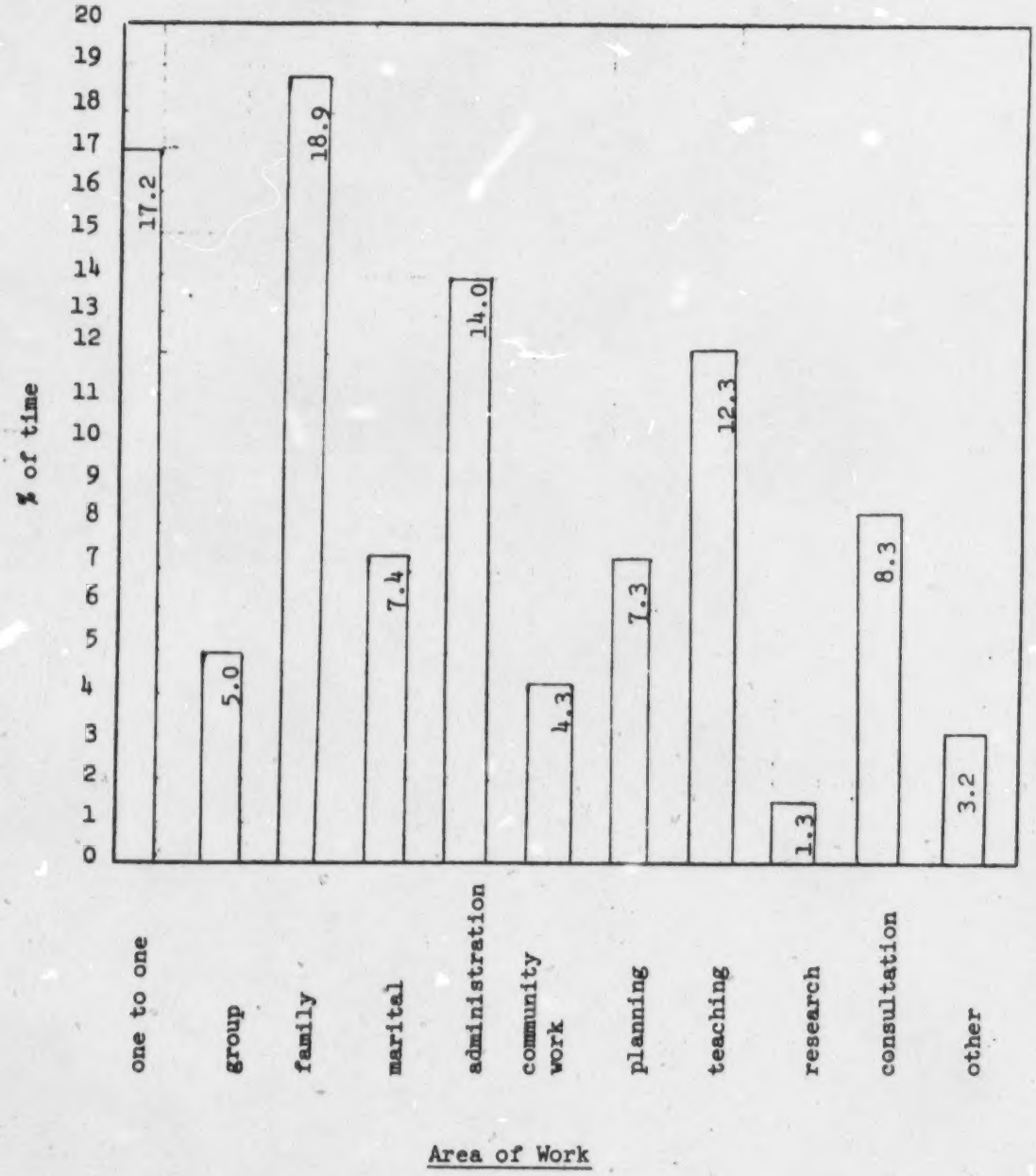
(g) Areas of Family Work

Participants were also asked to provide information on the percentage of time they spent in various areas of work and the percentage of time spent working with different types of families. Figure 1 gives a graphic picture of the average amount of time spent in different areas of work.

It can be seen that the majority (62.9%) of the respondents' time is spent in four areas: one-to-one counselling, family counselling, administration, and teaching. Two or three of the respondents indicated that although some of their work might be considered to be marital counselling, they considered it to be family counselling. (Presumably this was work with childless couples. These cases have been included in Figure 1 as family counselling.) It is apparent, even considering the possibility of heavy skewing due to one-function single cases (e.g. two or three participants who taught a high proportion of the time) that those at the conference were not <u>solely</u> involved in family counselling; rather work with families is one of many functions performed by these workers.

Figure 1

Average Percentage of time spent in areas of work*
(N = 93)



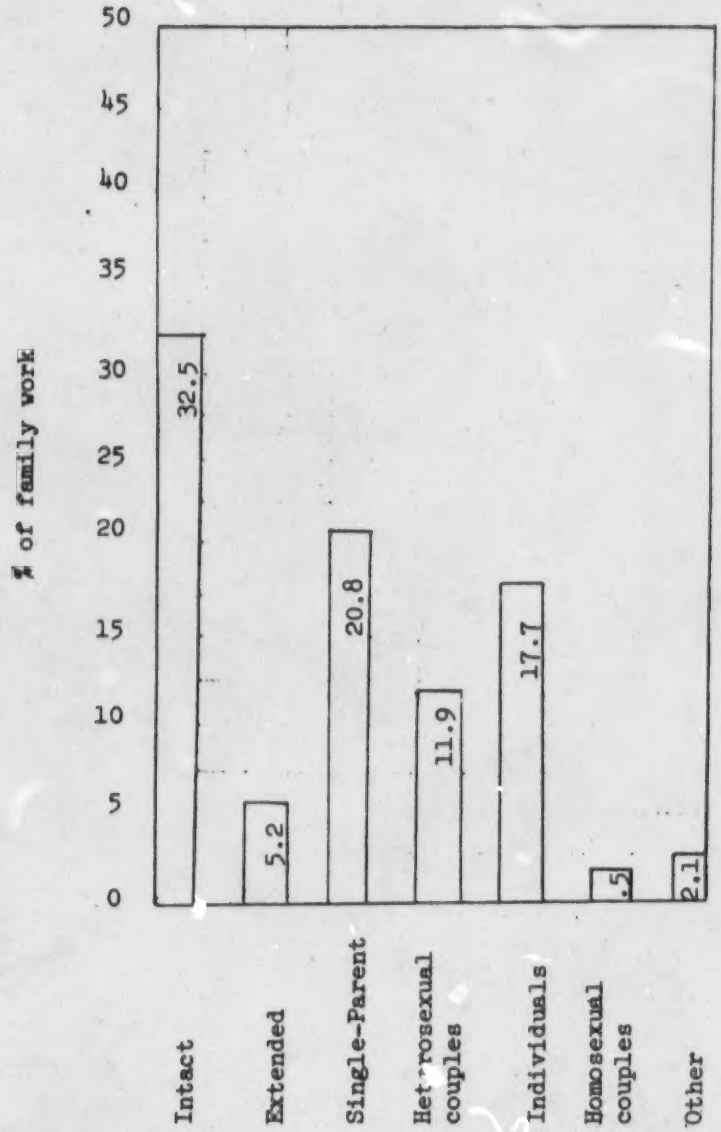
* Total less than 100% because not all respondents accounted for 100% of their time.

(h) Types of Families

The average amount of time spent by conference participants with different types of families is shown in Figure 2. "Intact" families (mother, father and children) receive the largest proportion of the worker's attention (32.5%) while single parents receive the second largest percentage of time (21%). Extended families (5%) and homosexual couples (.5%) received the least. Again, as in the case of areas of work, the nature of family units with which the respondents work is diverse.

Figure 2

Average % of "family work" spent on types of family units*
(N = 93)



* Total less than 100% because not all respondents accounted for 100% of their time.

(2) Conference Evaluation

This section describes respondent's reactions to the Banff Conference and their perception of the effects of the conference.

(a) Participant Goals

Participants were asked to rank order their reasons for attending the conference (Table 7).

Three main reasons seem to have received the highest rankings both in terms of the average ranking and in choice of the item as one of the first three ranks. (These items also received the highest numbers of completions):

(1) To learn about alternate theoretical approaches in work with families.

(2) To get new ideas about what is going on in the family work field.

(3) To gain applied skills for working with families.

It is of interest that gaining applied skills had such a high priority for the participants even though this was not one of the formal goals of the conference planners.

Table 7. Respondent Goals: Frequency, Average Rank* and Percent of Rank Ordering (1 is most important)

Reasons	Frequency Response to Rank (N=93)										No. Total Responses to Item	Average Response	% Choosing item as one of 1st 3 ranks
	Rank												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
To take a break from my work	1	-	4	5	10	13	8	15	21	2	79	6.7	6%
To meet other people involved in family work	4	4	11	14	21	14	14	5	1	-	88	3.9	22%
To hear a particular instructor or resource person	2	3	5	7	11	16	8	18	10	-	80	6.2	13%
To see other professionals at work with families	6	10	13	19	13	13	6	5	1	-	86	4.4	34%
To get new ideas about what is going on in the family work field	26	23	20	6	8	4	2	-	-	-	89	2.6	78%
To learn about alternate theoretical approaches in work with families	29	21	12	16	5	1	4	-	1	-	89	2.7	70%
To gain more knowledge of problems faced by families	3	3	6	11	9	11	20	9	7	1	80	5.8	15%
To gain applied skills for working with families	27	23	13	6	6	3	4	4	2	-	88	3.0	72%
To obtain "feedback" on how effectively I work with families	1	3	8	7	4	3	10	18	20	-	74	6.6	16%
Other	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	6		

*The average rank in this table and other similar tables which follow is the average rank given by those ranking each reason. Thus the average rank for "to take a break from my work" was found using 79 as the number of respondents, not 93. The frequency of rank given is provided for the total population of 93 respondents.

(b) Participant Goal Achievement

Respondents were then asked to describe how well the conference met their reasons for attending (Table 8).

Table 8.

Degree to which Participant Goals were Met

Goal	Degree (N=93) Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Poorly 5	No. Responding to Item	Aver. Response	% Ranking as "1" or "2"
To take a break from my work	53	8	11	2	3	77	1.6	79%
To meet other people involved in family work	24	35	26	2	1	88	2.2	67%
To hear a particular instructor or resource person	23	21	29	6	1	80	2.3	55%
To see other professionals at work with families	11	23	22	23	6	85	2.9	40%
To get new ideas about what is going on in the family work field	24	32	25	9	1	91	2.2	62%
To learn about alternate theoretical approaches in work with families	31	31	19	7	1	89	2.1	43%
To gain more knowledge of problems faced by families	5	17	33	18	5	78	3.0	28%
To gain applied skills for working with families	8	21	27	23	7	88	2.9	33%
To obtain "feedback" on how effectively I work with families	2	8	14	25	26	75	3.9	13%
Other	3	3	-	-	1	7		

Although taking a break from work was ranked as the lowest reason for attending the conference by participants, it was rated the highest in terms of the degree to which the conference met this reason. While the data seems somewhat contradictory, there are some probable explanations. It is possible for instance, that it was unacceptable to workers to admit that conferences serve a purpose of "getting away from work" and thus placed it as a low priority. Conversely, because it was indeed a low priority, yet the location provided an excellent setting for a "breather", it was "safe" to give this a high rank in terms of goal achievement. The fact that only 77 out of 93 responded to this item suggests that it was not a high intensity item.

When one turns to the other three reasons for attending in Table 8, the second highest achievement of the conference was meeting other people involved in family work (67% chose this as "1" or "2"). While this item was not given a high priority for attending the conference by the participants it was, as we will see later (Table 9), one of the conference organizers' goals.

The opportunity to obtain new ideas about what is going on in the family work field was the only reason for attending given a high rank and also rated as fairly highly achieved (62% gave a "1" or "2" to this reason).

Forty-three percent of the respondents gave a "1" or "2" to the achievement of the goal to learn about alternate theoretical approaches to work with families, a goal which received a high rating as a reason for attending.

Gaining applied skills, another high ranking reason for attending, was given a low rating in terms of goal achievement.

(c) Conference Goal Achievement

Table 9 displays data about the degree to which the conference was seen by respondents to have achieved the goals established by the conference planners.

Table 9

Conference Goal Achievement

Conference Goals	Frequency (N=93) Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Poorly 5	No. Responding to goal	Aver. Response	% Giving a "1" or "2" response
To provide participants with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the available approaches and theories related to work with families	22	49	15	6	-	92	2.1	77%
To provide opportunities for participants to understand differences between selected approaches, as well as similarities and points of integration	12	29	30	20	1	92	2.7	45%
To increase the awareness and understanding of participants of innovative field practices in work with families	12	41	27	12	-	92	2.4	58%
To develop a dialogue and increase interaction amongst practitioners, supervisors and teachers involved in family practice in western Canada with the view of improving resource sharing and building regional competencies	17	30	28	14	2	91	2.4	52%

Over three-quarters of the respondents (77%) felt that the conference provided an opportunity to expand their knowledge of available approaches and theories - a goal similar to the participants' goal in Table 7 of learning about alternate theoretical approaches in work with families. Interestingly, only 43% saw this as being "successfully achieved" in Table 8.

Referring again to Table 9, roughly one half of the respondents felt that each of the other three conference goals was achieved (i.e., gave a "1" or "2" rating). The least satisfactory was opportunities to compare and understand selected approaches to practice with families.

(d) Conference Impact

The participants were next asked to indicate their agreement with statements about changes in their practice which might have occurred as a result of the conference (Table 10). Most participants (87%) agreed that they had significantly improved their knowledge and understanding of principles and theories of at least one approach to family practice. Well over half (60%) felt they had made useful contacts with other professionals, and just over half agreed that they had discovered new agencies and services. The fact that a large proportion agreed that useful contacts with other professionals were made coincides with earlier data that the conference had met the participants' desire to meet others (Table 8). However, the actual use of the contacts made, or services discovered, is much less than the awareness of these - 39% in terms of contacts with other professionals, and 18% in terms of services or agencies.

Table 10

Changes in Practice as a Result of Conference

Changes in Practice	1	2	3	4	5	No. responding to statement	Aver. Resp.	% Agreeing "1" & "2"
As a result of the conference I have made useful contacts with other professionals	7	46	24	8	4	89	1.9	60%
As a result of the conference I have made useful contacts with other professionals which I have used already in my practice	3	31	33	11	10	88	2.7	39%
As a result of the conference I have discovered new agencies or services	5	42	26	12	4	89	2.5	53%
As a result of the conference I have discovered new services or agencies which I have since used in my practice	9	10	45	17	10	88	2.9	18%
As a result of the conference I have significantly improved my knowledge and understanding of the principles and theories of at least one approach to family practice	24	56	7	3	2	92	2.1	87%

(e) Changes in Worker Practice

Respondents were asked if they perceived any change at all in their approach to practice as a result of the conference. The answers are shown in Table 11, which indicates that 70% perceived some changes had occurred.

Table 11

Respondents Who Changed Their Approach to Practice as a Result of the Conference
(N = 93)

Changed Approach	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	65	70%
No	24	26%
No Answer	4	4%
Total	93	100%

Fifty-nine of the 65 people who said their approach to family practice had changed explained the nature of the change. The most frequently mentioned changes involved using a multigenerational systems approach (20%), a problem solving approach (19%), and network-based family therapy (12%).

(f) Changes in Agency Practice

Table 12 displays responses to the question of whether any changes had occurred in the respondent's agency as a result of the conference. The majority (69%) said no changes had occurred, but a quarter (26%) felt there had been changes.

Table 12

Changes in Respondents' Agencies as a Result of Conference
(N = 93)

Changes Occurred in Agency	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	24	26
No	64	69
No Answer	5	5
Total	93	100%

Twenty-five people described the nature of the changes in their agencies. The three most frequently mentioned changes were a general increase in awareness of the needs of families and the adoption of portions of techniques (44%), workshops offered to other staff on family practice (24%) and the establishment of new programs to deal with families in a new way (12%).

(g) Additional Comments

When asked if they would recommend the conference to their colleagues, 88% of those responding said that they would. Other comments about the conference do not fall into any obvious categorization, but dealt generally with changes in organization and presentation. There was little agreement on the preferred changes.

3. Support and Resources for Workers in Family Practice

One of the underlying assumptions of the conference organizers was that western Canada was at a disadvantage in that informal and formal systems and networks designed to support family workers was not yet in place or as

developed as in eastern Canada and the U.S. and that opportunities for training and education in this field of work were limited.

Participants were asked to describe the support and resources available to them in their work, their satisfaction with them, and their feelings about training, education, and networks of support. The results are given in this section.

(a) Quantity and Quality of Resources

Conference attendees were first asked to assess both the quantity and quality of resources available to them in their communities to assist in the performance of their work with families. Their responses are shown in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

Quantity of Resources Available to Family Workers in Respondents' Communities
(N = 93)

Evaluation	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Nonexistent	2	2
Inadequate	45	48
Adequate	38	41
More than Adequate	3	3
No Answer	5	5
Total	93	100%

Table 14

Quality of Resources Available to Family Workers in Respondents' Communities
(N = 93)

Evaluation	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Inadequate	39	42
Adequate	43	46
More than Adequate	4	4
No Answer	7	8
Total	93	100%

Respondents are almost evenly divided between seeing the quantity of resources available to them as adequate or as inadequate or non-existent.

In Table 14, which deals with the quality of resources available, a similar split occurs, but slightly more than half feel the resources are of adequate or more than adequate quality.

(b) Use of Community Resources

Participants were requested to choose a statement which best reflects their current use of the resources available to them in the community. Table 15 shows their responses. No definition of the term "resources" was given, leaving the interpretation to the respondents.

Forty-four percent felt that they already use all resources available as required. Although 42% had indicated they felt the quality of resources was inadequate (Table 14) only 11% felt this prevented the use of resources in some areas.

Table 15

Respondents' Views of their Use of Community Resources

Item	# of Respondents Selecting Item	% of Respondents Selecting Item
Because there are no resources, I simply can't use them.	7	8
Because I do not know what resources exist, I am unable to use them.	-	-
I find it difficult to use the resources even though I know they exist, because I do not know whom to contact.	3	3
All the resources I need are right in my agency, so I don't use outside help.	9	10
I already use all the resources in my community when required.	41	44
Although the resources exist, they are too costly to use.	2	2
Although I know most of the resources in my community, I am unable to use them because they do not seem to be accessible.	17	18
Although I know most of the resources in my community, I do not use them in some areas because they do not appear to be of high enough quality.	10	11
No Answer	4	4
Total	93	100%

Twenty-two people made more specific comments on the weaknesses of the resources available to them. The two major weaknesses were the treating of portions of a family, rather than the whole (32%) and insufficient skills on the part of the staff (32%). Some participants also raised other issues about resources, their comments varying from the need to maintain communication between agencies, to the need for a residential treatment centre for families.

When asked if referrals to other agencies ever conflicted with the interests of their own agency, most people (64%), as Table 16 indicates, said they didn't, but a quarter felt a conflict of interest did occur. Again, the interpretation of "conflict of interest" was left to the respondent.

Table 16

Respondents Who Feel that Referrals to Other Agencies Conflict with their Own Agency Interests
(N = 93)

Conflict	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	24	26
No	60	64
No Answer	9	10
Total	93	100%

Of the participants who felt there was a conflict of interest, 54% said the conflict does prevent them from making referrals (Table 17).

Table 17

Respondents Who Feel that Conflict of Interests Prevents them from Making Referrals
(N = 24)

Prevents Referrals	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	13	54
No	9	36
No Answer	2	8
Total	24	98%

The comments made by the people who felt conflicts prevented them from making referrals had little in common. They ranged from competition over funds as a problem to disagreement with other agencies' treatment procedures.

(c) Level of Participant Knowledge, Skills and Training

Table 18 gives the participants' assessment of their own knowledge, skills and training for dealing with problems in family practice.

Table 18

Respondents' Evaluation of Own Knowledge, Skills and Training to Work with Families
(N = 93)

Evaluation	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Excellent	6	7
Good	39	42
Suggicient	32	34
Poor	6	7
Completely Inadequate	-	-
No Answer	10	11
Total	93	101

Eighty-three percent felt they were adequately equipped to deal with most family problems they encountered. These findings may reflect the general level of the conference attendees in terms of both education and experience.

Fifty-two people identified areas which they felt were weaknesses. The most frequently mentioned weaknesses identified were insufficient training and skills (19%), insufficient theoretical knowledge (12%), too few opportunities to obtain feedback from other professionals (12%), and lack of knowledge and skills to deal with specific problems such as alcoholism (12%).

(d) Sources of Assistance When Problems Encountered

Participants were asked to rank order some possible actions they might take when faced with a problem in family work for which they were inadequately prepared. The frequency of ranks given to various responses and the average rank for each response is given in Table 19. A very high number turn to another colleague in their agency. Markedly less attractive, but still the second and third most frequently chosen high rank are turning to the immediate supervisors or to a colleague in another agency, or discussing at a case conference.

Use of other consultants, referrals or use of books and journals generally received the lower rankings.

Table 19

Responses to Need for Assistance in Family Work Practice
(1 indicates highest rank)

Response to Problem	Rank 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Number Responding	Average Response	% Ranking 1-3
Turn to my immediate supervisor	12	11	8	6	2	8	6	2	-	55	3.6	56.
Turn to another colleague in my agency	36	18	8	7	4	-	2	-	-	75	2.1	82.7
Turn to a colleague in another agency	9	12	13	9	15	5	4	2	-	69	2.8	49.3
Turn to books and journals	9	5	18	12	13	11	3	1	-	72	3.9	44.4
Discuss at a case conference	3	21	13	16	8	5	4	1	-	71	3.5	51.4
Refer the client	6	8	5	8	6	13	14	4	1	65	4.4	29.2
Use other consultants	10	8	8	12	14	8	4	-	-	64	3.8	40.6
I don't meet such situations generally	5	-	5	-	1	1	7	16	-	35	5.9	28.6
Other (please specify)	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	4.5	50.0

Participants were then asked about their satisfaction with the resources available to them for dealing with problems for which they felt inadequately prepared. The results given in Table 20 indicate that the majority of them (71%) were satisfied with the resources.

Table 20

Satisfaction with Resources Available to Respondents for Dealing with Problems in Practice
(N = 93)

Satisfaction	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Completely Satisfied	11	12
Satisfied	55	59
Not Satisfied At All	20	22
No Answer	7	8
Total	93	101%

Those who were not satisfied indicated various areas of concern in the 'comments' section. Of 27 people indicating dissatisfaction (more than those who said they were not satisfied at all), 33% said they need better resources available to them, 26% said they would like more consultation with other professionals, and 19% wanted more training in family work for themselves.

(e) Worker Networks

Table 21 indicates the responses to the question of whether a method of promotion, collaboration, information-sharing, informal learning and consultation between professionals engaged in family work existed in the respondent's community.

Table 21

Existence of a Community Network for Family Practitioners

Community Network Exists	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	25	27
No	61	66
No Answer	7	8
Total	93	101%

Sixty-six percent said such a network did not exist. Thirty-one people commented on what did exist, 29% of them indicating an informal method of sharing existed, 23% that a formal, but partial network existed, and 19% that the method which was available was not good enough for their purposes.

When asked if they felt such a method of sharing information etc. had value in principle, 94% felt that it did (see Table 22).

Table 22

Does a Community Network of Information and Learning Have Value in Principle?

Response	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	87	94
No Answer	6	7
Total	93	101

Participants were then asked to rank order likely obstacles to forming such a system in their community. Table 23 gives the frequency of ranks applied to each obstacle and the average rank of each obstacle.

Table 23

Most Likely Obstacles to Forming a Community Network Between Family Workers (1 is highest rank)

Obstacle	Frequency (N=93) Rank 1	2	3	4	5	No. Responding to obstacle	Average Rank Given
Requires too much structure and leadership	28	15	17	12	-	63	1.9
Would take too much time and people would not participate.	22	23	7	2	2	56	1.9
There is too much conflict, competition or animosity amongst agencies and/or staffs to allow it to work.	10	13	14	15	1	53	2.7
There just would not be enough "returns" for involvement in such activities.	4	8	13	26	2	49	3.4
Other	19	3	1	-	-	23	1.2

Participants felt that the two most likely obstacles to forming a community network were that too much structure and leadership would be required, and that it would be time-consuming and people would not participate. These reasons were also raised a few times previously in the comments about existing networks.

The wording of the questions leaves us unable to conclude that these perceived obstacles mean that the respondents would not be interested in a community network. We can only conclude that the respondents gave a higher ranking to the first two obstacles. The fact that the highest responses to an item was 63 out of 93, and that 23 out of 93 gave other reasons, suggests

that the data has limited value for interpretation purposes. It is left in this report, however, because this kind of information would be important for others to develop more fully if they were planning to examine interest in a community network.

(f) Training and Education in Family Work

As Table 24 shows, when asked if they would like more education and training in family work available to them, 88% of the respondents said they would.

Table 24

Respondents Who Would Like Additional Training and Education Available to Them.

Would Like Additional Training & Education	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	82	88
No	6	7
No Answer	5	5
Total	93	100%

Those participants who had indicated they would like further education and training available were then asked to rank order various approaches to further education. The frequency of ranks given to the approaches and the average rank are shown in Table 25. The approach receiving the highest average rank from most participants was that of regular problem-oriented seminars or workshops with an emphasis on skill development. This would seem to tie in with the earlier findings that gaining applied skills was a major reason for attending the 1977 Banff Conference. The next highest

Table 25.

Most Valuable Method of Obtaining Additional Training and Education

Method	Frequency of Ranks Given Rank (N=93)											No. Responding to method	Aver. Resp.	% Ranking 1-3
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
Conferences on work with families	7	9	10	7	15	12	6	2	1	2	-	71	4.2	36.6
On-going supervision/support by a senior member of my agency	5	6	6	5	6	6	7	7	5	5	-	58	5.6	29.3
Intensive "internships" where I would work in a special practice/teaching clinic under the supervision of competent practitioners/ teachers	24	9	9	5	6	1	3	3	3	2	-	65	3.3	64.6
Regular and accessible seminars ar various levels on various aspects of family work	16	18	18	13	5	8	-	1	2	-	-	81	3.2	64.2
Opportunities to read journals & books	1	2	1	4	6	5	9	13	11	6	1	59	7.1	6.8
In-agency staff development using outside experts for our entire staff according to the identified needs of staff	13	2	12	9	7	6	6	2	3	3	-	63	4.4	42.9
Regular and accessible problem-oriented seminars/workshops which focus mostly on improving my methods of practice with families using simulations, live or video-taped demonstrations, etc.	12	30	11	9	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	74	2.9	71.6
Case Conferences	-	2	2	2	5	11	11	12	9	3	-	57	6.9	7.0
University credit courses at various levels	-	1	3	5	7	3	6	9	11	13	-	58	7.4	6.9
A team of specialists with whom I could consult on problems, new approaches, etc.	2	8	8	15	5	7	7	5	4	7	-	68	5.4	26.5
Other	4	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1.9	85.7

ranks given by most participants were for seminars on various aspects of family work and for intensive internships. University credit courses, case conferences, and opportunities to read journals were ranked the lowest methods of obtaining additional training and education.

Because of the potential for a generalized bias in responses caused by many of the questions being oriented to education and training, an attempt was made to obtain some sense of the relative importance of education and training in relation to other means of improving service effectiveness. Respondents were asked to rank order a series of possible means of improving service to families in their agencies. The results are displayed in Table 26.

The highest rank given by most participants was to better in-service education and staff development. The next highest rank was given to more training seminars/workshops through colleges and universities. Organizational changes in the agency, and better inter-agency cooperation and collaboration were third and fourth in order of importance.

It would appear that matters relating to education, both through in-service education and by universities and colleges, appear to take precedence over other means of improving agency services to clients such as improved accessibility to client, better financing, or reduced caseloads. While this question was designed primarily as an attempt to measure priorities given to education and training, it is of interest that organizational changes in the agency and improved inter-agency cooperation were each given one of the three highest ranks by close to half (50% and 43% respectively) of the participants.

Table 26.

Importance Given to Means of Improvements in Agency Services to Families

(1 indicates highest rank)

Improvements in Agency Service	Frequency of Rank (N=93)										No. responding to Improvement	Aver. Rank	% Ranking 1-3
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Reduced case loads	5	11	6	4	4	5	4	10	6	-	55	5.0	40.0
Organizational changes in my agency	11	10	10	6	3	2	9	9	2	-	62	4.3	50.0
Better office space	1	4	3	4	1	5	6	9	14	4	51	6.9	15.7
Better in-service education and staff development	17	17	14	12	6	2	-	-	1	-	69	2.8	69.6
More and better training, workshops/seminars through colleges and universities	12	11	17	7	9	5	5	2	1	1	70	3.7	57.1
Better financing of agency	14	2	4	4	5	6	3	9	6	3	56	5.1	35.7
Improved accessibility of agency to client	6	5	6	8	6	6	8	5	6	1	57	5.1	29.8
Better inter-agency cooperation, collaboration	6	8	9	6	10	6	4	-	5	-	54	4.3	42.6
More available consultation services for special problems	6	8	6	10	9	10	7	2	2	2	62	4.6	32.3
Other	6	4	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	14	2.7	71.4

(g) Interprovincial Networks

Another of the goals of the 1977 Banff Conference was that of improving resource sharing and building regional competencies in western Canada.

In order to obtain some data as to the feasibility of extending this goal beyond the boundaries of the conference, participants were asked if they thought an interprovincial method of improving information, education and training, and encouraging improved services to families would be valuable in principle, and if so, who should initiate the method. Their answers are given in Tables 27 and 28.

Table 27

Is an Interprovincial Network Valuable in Principle?
(N = 93)

Has Value	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	82	88
No	5	5
No Answer	6	7
Total	93	100

The largest number of respondents preferred either a new western association of family workers (26%) or a consortium of existing agencies, associations and institutions (24%). Federal and Provincial governments, existing professional associations, and Schools or Faculties of Social Work received relatively low responses.

Table 28.

How Should the Interprovincial Network be Initiated?
(N=93)

Means of Initiation	# of Participants	% of Participants
By appropriate Provincial Government structures	8	9
By the Federal Government	2	2
By a separate, new Western Association of Family Workers	24	26
By the Faculties/Schools of Social Work of the western provinces	12	13
By an "animateur" or organizer, funded by a variety of sources, but not responsible to any one group	7	8
By an existing professional association, such as Associations of psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists or nurses	2	2
Through a consortium of service agencies, professional associations, educational institutions in western Canada	22	24
Other (please specify)	1	1
No Answer	15	16
Total	93	101%

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A. THE CONFERENCE

1. Professional Composition

If the large proportion of social workers (55%) to other professions present at this conference was found to be representative of the field (a conclusion which cannot be reached from this study) then it would suggest that a large group of social workers is moving into the broad area of family work. An equally viable suggestion is that because the program was sponsored by Schools of Social Work and the instructors were primarily Social Work faculty members, it was of prime interest to social workers and this thus affected the composition of the participant body. A further issue is raised as to whether or not the conference should be aimed at only the social work profession or whether it should be organized to attract a wider range of professionals working in the family area.

. Education

The conference has obviously appealed to the more educationally advanced worker inasmuch as 60% of the participants held either a Masters or a Doctorate. It would seem that those attending the conference may be interested in more advanced seminars rather than only introductory seminars. When education is combined with numbers of years that respondents have worked with families, the data would suggest that this group has considerable experience inasmuch as 55% have worked with families professionally for five or more years, and approximately 75% have worked with families for three or more years.

Again, questions may be raised as to the future directions of the conference, that is, is it to be designed for those who are primarily experienced and have advanced education, or is it to be designed for those just entering the field? Can it indeed provide services for both? During the field visits, several participants expressed strong views that mixing of persons with advanced experience and education with those who are just beginning in the field of family practice detracted from the learning experience of the more advanced persons. Several times suggestions were made that the conference should serve a "cutting edge" function, introducing new and innovative material of interest to those who already have a background in the field. This view was not, however, held by all persons attending the group meetings.

3. Location of Participants

It is apparent that the goal of the conference to hold a western conference was indeed achieved, inasmuch as the very largest proportion of respondents was from the four western provinces.

There appeared to be a diversity of opinion as to the validity of maintaining a primarily western conference during the discussions held at the field visits. Several times suggestions were made that the opportunity to meet specialists who were accessible to them by being in the western provinces was extremely important. Further, some participants suggested that the opportunity to meet colleagues from the same city whom they had not had the opportunity of meeting previously was an added advantage. In fact, at two meetings, some of those attending urged that provisions for meeting others at the conference who were from the same

region or city should be included in the 1978 conference. A similar number of comments made during the field visits raised doubt about a continual focus on western Canada and especially the exclusive use of resources in western Canada. Fear was expressed that this would lead to stagnation of the conference. No clear cut preferences were obtained during the group meetings, and the issue obviously needs further examination.

The fact that 86% of the participants came from fairly large urban areas may suggest that "family work" is a creature of the cities which have the luxury of specialization. Discussions during the preliminary interviews and during the field visits suggested that rural persons felt isolated and lacking in resources to support them in family practice. They tended to see their jobs as having much more of a generalist function. Attention to clarifying who the conference is for is suggested here. If the conference is designed to provide ongoing support for rural areas, as well as urban areas, then some specialized input regarding rural family work may be important.

The two furthest provinces from Banff, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, had the smallest numbers of participants. Other factors, such as relative population and economic conditions may also have been factors affecting the make-up of the participants and it is therefore impossible to suggest that there is a direct relationship between accessibility of the conference and attendance at the conference. However, the fact that recommendations were made in five of the six group meetings that the conference location should be rotated amongst provinces would suggest that distance is indeed an influential factor. The case for rotating locations was reinforced by the

fact that two provinces have public service policies which discourage attendance at out-of-province conferences. Again, depending on the goals and future function of the conference, this issue needs to be looked at carefully.

4. Nature of Work and Types of Families

The data portrayed in Figures 1 and 2 point to a considerable diversity in the function of those attending the conference. Obviously, family and marital counselling is only one of a number of tasks carried out by the respondents. Even when they are asked about the kind of families they worked with in their "family work", the range of types is also diverse, with intact families, single-parent families and individuals consuming 71% of the time devoted to family work. If these data are reflective of the type of participant expected to attend future conferences, then a focus on only one type of family counselling or setting would not meet the needs of the diverse group attending. Furthermore, some implications for ongoing training at the local level are suggested by these findings, that is that a diversity of training experiences will be required, including training for work with intact families, extended families, single-parent families, marital couples and individuals and to some degree homosexual couples. Furthermore, training for intervention in various settings, including one-to-one counselling and group counselling, may be required inasmuch as workers do not only work in family settings.

5. Conference and Participant Goals

Some discrepancy between the goals of attending the conference by the participants, and the goals of the conference organizers is apparent in the data on participant goals and conference goals. The most obvious discrepancy exists in the desire of the respondents to gain applied skills for working with families, a goal which was not one of the goals of the conference organizers. Consequently, this is reflected in the fact that only 33% of the respondents gave a rank order of "1" or "2" to having achieved this goal.

On the other hand, there appears to be much more congruence in terms of the goals about knowledge and theory. Almost three-quarters of the respondents rank ordered "to learn about alternate theoretical approaches to work with families" as one of the first three ranks and slightly over three-quarters suggested that the conference achieved their goal of providing participants with an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the available approaches and theories related to work with families. There may be a discrepancy, however, between the opportunity and the actual achievement inasmuch as less than one half of the respondents felt that their goal to learn about alternate theoretical approaches was achieved.

The data would seem to suggest strongly that respondents saw the conference as providing stimulation in the area of knowledge, and that while the knowledge aspects could be seen as somewhat achieved, the skills aspects were much less achieved. This again raises the question as to whether a conference is the appropriate format for skills training, or whether the conference format serves best a medium for presenting new knowledge, information and approaches and for conferring amongst practitioners and academics.

6. Conference Impact

The information obtained from the questionnaires relating to the conference impact again suggests that the conference was best at improving the knowledge and understanding of principles and theories of family practice and creating useful contacts. However the direct use of these activities or knowledge to the field seems to be somewhat less. Given that some 70% reported that changes had occurred in their practice as a result of the conference, and that this tended to be in the application of specific approaches taught at the conference, a number of questions are again raised about the "skill vs. theory" function of the conference discussed earlier. There seems to be some evidence that practitioners are implementing approaches which, in the minds of the conference organizers, were not presented from the point of view of implementation but rather from the point of view of increasing the theoretical base of the practitioner. This point was echoed in one or two cases in the field meetings where concern was expressed that the "one shot" training events were being used by practitioners on the assumption that they are now skilled and able to implement the approaches taught. Again there is a need for considerably more careful examination of this issue,but it should be raised here inasmuch as it continues to be a concern in many staff development and education situations.

The knowledge and information received at the conference by practitioners, while having an impact on their own practice, seemed to have considerably less impact on their agencies. Still an impressive one-quarter of the participants suggested that changes had occurred in the agency although this was primarily identified with workshops offered or adoptions

of portions of the techniques taught at the conference. We can see that, at least to some degree, the conference has had an impact at the agency level. Conference organizers may wish to look carefully at the process by which this knowledge does get used to ensure that their intentions and the outcomes are congruent. There is some evidence that a discrepancy exists between the intentions of the conference organizers and the results of the conference, as well as the needs of practitioners and the intentions of the conference organizers.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR FAMILY WORK IN WESTERN CANADA

1. Present Resources

In contrast to one of the assumptions made by the conference organizers that resources for training, education and support for family work were very limited in western Canada, close to half the respondents felt that the quantity and quality of resources were adequate and the largest portion (44%) reported using all the resources when required. There exists, however, a significant group which sees resources as inadequate and is not using them to their maximum potential. Attention to this area seems a fruitful source of improving service effectiveness.

Because of the small number of rural workers present at the conference, correlations were not made between location of work and reported adequacy of resources. However, an informal study made during the interviews at the conference suggested that by and large those in rural areas did indeed feel that the quality and quantity of resources available to them were much more limited, as one would expect.

2. Knowledge and Skills of Participants

A very few number of respondents perceived their knowledge, skills and training as completely inadequate or poor. The largest portion felt that they were at least sufficient and probably good. This information, when combined with information about the experience and education of the respondents, again suggests that a fairly competent and sophisticated group attended that conference and that attention should be given to the needs of this group.

When they do have difficulties in providing services for which they lack training, skills or knowledge, the most common response is to turn to another colleague in the agency, their immediate supervisor, a colleague in another agency, or to discuss it at a case conference. A small number of people (about 22%) would see this action as being insufficient or unsatisfactory. Interestingly, the use of outside consultants, journals or referrals tendsto be less often chosen as a course of action. The need for training supervisors and colleagues to act as consultants in cases where the worker feels he/she lacks skills and knowledge to deal with the case may seem evident by this data, or at least suggests fruitful directions for future study.

3. Worker Support Systems

While one obvious means of support to workers is from colleagues in the agency and when one looks at the communities in which workers carry out their functions, there appears to be only one-quarter of the respondents who suggest that a community network exists to help them in obtaining collaboration, information sharing, informal learning or consultation. When combined with

the data received during the field visits - that a major need exists for better and improved information sharing etc. - it would appear that this area is one of the most important for future action identified in this report. The largest proportion of respondents felt that the idea of some kind of community network was of value, although the data does not give us sufficient information to know if they are also disposed to organizing such a system. Any group attempting to create such a network would be wise in looking carefully at some of the barriers which may exist to such networks.

There do appear to be a number of instances where disagreement and limited contact between various groups concerned with family work exist, and these instances are more noticeable in some communities than others. Further, there are several examples where any problems which may be caused by the limited interaction of groups may be overcome by new emerging consultations amongst practitioners, academics and agencies. It is hoped that this report will itself facilitate that process.

4. Training and Education in Family Work

There seems no doubt that a very large proportion of the respondents wish additional education and training in family work and that the means which will best meet their needs are regular and accessible problem-oriented seminars and workshops which focus on improving methods of practice with families, using various simulations, live situations or video tape demonstrations. Almost of equal importance are intensive internships where the practitioner can work under supervision, and regular seminars at various

levels and on various aspects of family work.

When combined with the field information, this area seems to rate very high as a concern of the respondents. The level of experience and education of those completing the questionnaires would suggest that a high quality education and training program at the local level would be required. One should keep in mind that there does seem to still be a significant portion of people who are just entering family work and who need basic education as well.

5. Provincial Networks

There seems to be an interest by a very large group of respondents in some kind of communication between provinces. It is apparent that the most fruitful and helpful means of creating inter-provincial communication would be through the establishment of something beyond what already exists, either a new western association of family workers, or some kind of consortium of agencies, professional associations, educational institutions, etc. Least popular would be to have any one professional association, federal or provincial government department, or an "animateur" undertake the responsibility for developing such a program.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

While the foregoing discussion has been extensive, it has not exhausted the possible implications of the data obtained. In view of the fact that the data is limited to a group of people having attended one conference, it would seem inappropriate to place much more emphasis on investigations of

this limited population. However a number of points have been consistently raised in the data and the discussions. These are presented in summary and point form below.

1. The 1977 Banff Conference would appear on the whole to have met its goals, and a large proportion of the participants seem to feel that they would recommend it. What is not clear is what the future function of the conference should be - whether it should function to present new and advanced knowledge and information relating to family work, or whether it should be primarily oriented towards skills training. The functions of conferring of knowledge dissmeniation and possibly of coordination through information-sharing amongst regions are promising possibilities.

2. One of the most critical needs identified is that of coordination of information and activities at the local level as it relates to family work. Some experiments were identified in the course of the discussions and perhaps additional experiments need to be undertaken to test various models. One of the important functions of any information sharing would need to be that of encouraging cooperation and collaboration amongst various segments of the family work community, and increasing the ability to develop actions that are coherent with the needs of the client.

3. Another most significant need is in the field of education and training. Training appears to be needed at the local level and needs to be in-depth, with opportunities for a variety of subject matter and approaches related to family practice. Whether or not any one institution can carry on that function is doubtful. It would seem, however, that the ideal, if

at all possible, would be for a close collaboration at the local level between professional groups, agencies and educational bodies to collectively respond to the needs identified.

4. There seems to be a strong interest in an interprovincial network of some kind. The nature of this network was not pursued in this study and should be examined more fully if next steps are to be taken in this direction. Sponsorship should be through a means other than the existing groups and agencies. This study reflects the views of a group of practitioners about their surroundings, and their ideas of what needs to happen to improve that environment so that better service to the client can occur. Their reactions are not to a vacuum, but to programs, agencies and policies which already exist, and it is a tribute to those involved that so much does already exist in western Canada in the way of services to families and support for family workers. What is called for is not the negation of what already exists, but the creative adaptation, addition and subtraction to meet ever-changing requirements.

It would seem that the 1977 Conference has made a significant contribution to that process and may very well continue to do so.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1977 CONFERENCE PROGRAM OUTLINE

FIRST WESTERN CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON FAMILY THERAPY

CLINICAL APPROACHES TO WORK WITH FAMILIES

PROGRAM

SUNDAY, June 26, 1977

18:00 hours	Registration (Room 307, Donald Cameron Hall)
19:30	Welcome (Room 307, Donald Cameron Hall)
20:00 - 21:00	Panel: Family Work in its Broader Context Room 307, Donald Cameron Hall
	Panelists: Prof. Maureen Wilson Faculty of Social Welfare The University of Calgary
	Mr. Paul Fritz Alberta Social Services and Community Health
	Prof. Rod Tomlinson Faculty of Social Welfare The University of Calgary
21:00 - 23:30	No-Host Bar (Reading Room - 2nd Floor, Donald Cameron Hall)

MONDAY, June 27, 1977

09:00 - 12:00 AND 13:30 - 16:30 hours	Concurrent Workshops (These will be repeated Tuesday, allowing participants to attend two different workshops)
Workshop 1:	A Multi-Generational Systems Approach to Family Therapy
	Dr. David Freeman, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia
	Room: 307 Donald Cameron Hall
Workshop 2:	A Systems-Interactional Approach to Family Therapy
	Professors Dolores and Don Ebert, Saskatoon Community Education Centre, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina
	Room: 308 Donald Cameron Hall
Workshop 3:	An Integrative Approach: Family Human Social Functioning
	Dr. Peggy Rodway, Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary
	Room: 205 Donald Cameron Hall

MONDAY, June 27, 1977

Workshop 4: Problem-Solving Family Therapy

Prof. Margaret Carlson, Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary

Room: 204 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 5: Network-Based Family Therapy

Dr. Gerry Erickson, School of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Room: 302 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 6: Behavioral Approches to Family Treatment

Dr. T. P. Hogan, Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba

Room: 201 Donald Cameron Hall

12:00 - 13:30 hours LUNCH - Banff Centre Cafeteria

*****PLEASE NOTE - Coffee will be delivered at 10:00 and 15:00 hours

MONDAY EVENING OPEN (Consult the Conference Information Centre for possible activities in and around Banff if you wish.)

TUESDAY, June 27, 1977

09:00 - 12:00 AND 13:30 - 16:30 hours	Repeat of Concurrent Workshops (Consult Monday's schedule for titles and locations.)
12:00 - 13:30 hours	Lunch - Banff Centre Cafeteria
17:00 - 19:00 hours	Dinner - Banff Centre Cafeteria
18:45 - 19:30	Special Workshop: Obesity and the Family: The Home Treatment Program Dr. Michael Lebow, University of Manitoba Room: 308 Donald Cameron Hall
19:30 - 21:30	A Dialogue - Family Practice: Issues and Perspectives Room: 307 Donald Cameron Hall
21:30 - 23:30	No-Host Bar (Reading Room)

WEDNESDAY, June 28, 1977

09:00 - 11:30 hours ONLY Special Workshop:

Working with Native Families

Mrs. Lillian Cropped Ear Wolf, Blood Band Social Services

Mr. Bob Langin, Community worker and consultant

Prof. Nelson Gutnick, Faculty of Social Welfare, The University of Calgary,

Room: 307 Donald Cameron Hall

09:00 - 11:30
AND 13:00 - 15:30 hours Workshops on Field Innovations
(Except for the workshop on Working with Native Families, these workshops will be offered twice to provide participants with the opportunity of attending two)

Workshop 1: Gifting: A Motive Technique in Working with Couples

Dr. Ben Chud, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia

Room: 308 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 2: The Child in the Family: Clinical Work with Children

Dr. Kloh-Ann Amacher, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia

Room: 308 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 3: Developing Family-Oriented Approches in Human Service Systems

Dr. Andrew Selig, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia

Room: 204 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 4: Engaging the Hard-To-Reach Family

Prof. Peg Peters and Prof. Rod Tomlinson, Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary

Room: 201 Donald Cameron

Workshop 5: Working with Blended Families

Ms. Carol Hechtenthal, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Room: 302 Donald Cameron Hall

Workshop 7: Supporting Families in Transition: Separation, Death, Divorce

Barbara Olsen, Volunteer Centre of Calgary

Room: 205 Donald Cameron Hall

12:00 - 13:30 hours LUNCH (Banff Centre Cafeteria)

**** PLEASE NOTE COFFEE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT 10:00 hours

WEDNESDAY (cont.)

15:30 - 17:00 hours	No-Host Bar (HAPPY HOUR)
17:00 - 18:30	Supper (Banff Centre Cafeteria)
19:00 - 21:00	Special Workshop on Teaching of Family Practice (For those involved in teaching and instruction in agencies, colleges and universities.) Locations and discussion groups to be announced.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

The University of Calgary
2920 24 AVE. N.W.
CALGARY, CANADA
T2N 1N4

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILY WORKERS

IN WESTERN CANADA

- EVALUATION OF 1977 BANFF CONFERENCE ON WORK WITH FAMILIES

- SURVEY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESOURCE NEEDS FOR FAMILY WORKERS

PLEASE: YOUR RESPONSE IS IMPORTANT TO THIS PROJECT. COMPLETE AND RETURN RIGHT AWAY IN THE STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO:

MORRIS BASKETT
FACULTY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
CALGARY, ALBERTA
T2N 1N4

PLEASE NOTE: NUMBERS IN BRACKETS ( ) ARE FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

PART A. BASIC DATA

1. Your profession (please check one)

Social Worker	____	(1)
Nurse	____	(2)
Psychologist	____	(3)
Psychiatrist	____	(4)
Teacher	____	(5)
School Counsellor	____	(6)
Other (please specify)		
_____	____	(7)

2. You are employed by a (please check one)

Private Agency	____	(1)
Public Agency	____	(2)
University	____	(3)
College	____	(4)
Self-Employed	____	(5)
Not Presently Employed	____	(6)
Other (please specify)		
_____	____	(7)

3. Approximately what percent of your professional time is devoted to the following areas:

One-To-One Counselling	____%	Planning	____%
Group Counselling	____%	Teaching	____%
Family Counselling	____%	Research	____%
Marital Counselling	____%	Consultation	____%
Administration	____%	Other (please specify)	
Community Work	____%	_____	____%
		Total	≅ 100%

4. Your highest educational attainment is (please check one):

Have Not Completed High School	____	(1)
High School Graduation Only	____	(2)
Two-Year College Training	____	(3)
Some University	____	(4)
R.N.	____	(5)
Bachelor's Degree	____	(6)
Master's Degree	____	(7)
Doctorate	____	(8)
Other (please specify) _____	____	(9)

5. What is the name of the town or city in which most of your work is carried out?

_____

6. For how many years have you worked professionally with families? _____

7. Approximately what percent of your "family work" is devoted to the following kinds of "family" units?

"Intact" families (mother, father, children)	____%
Extended families (mother and/or father, children and some other relatives such as grandparents, aunts/uncles	____%
Single-parent families	____%
Heterosexual couples (married or living in a significant couple relationship)	____%
Individuals of families	____%
Homosexual couples	____%
Other (please specify) _____	____%
TOTAL =	100% of your "family work"

8. Your sex: Male _____ (1) Female _____ (2)

PART B. CONFERENCE EVALUATION: 1977 BANFF CONFERENCE ON WORK WITH FAMILIES, HELD JUNE 25-29, 1977 AT BANFF, ALBERTA

9. Your main reasons for attending the conference were (please rank in order of importance to you, using number 1 to indicate the most important reason):

	Rank Order	Very Well				Very Poorly	
To take a break from my work	____	1	2	3	4	5	(1)
To meet other people involved in family work	____	1	2	3	4	5	(2)
To hear a particular instructor or resource person	____	1	2	3	4	5	(3)
To see other professionals at work with families	____	1	2	3	4	5	(4)
To get new ideas about what is going on in the family work field	____	1	2	3	4	5	(5)
To learn about alternate theoretical approaches in work with families	____	1	2	3	4	5	(6)
To gain more knowledge of problems faced by families	____	1	2	3	4	5	(7)
To gain applied skills for working with families	____	1	2	3	4	5	(8)
To obtain "feedback" on how effectively I work with families	____	1	2	3	4	5	(9)
Other (please specify) _____							
_____	____	1	2	3	4	5	(0)

10. We would like to know how well the conference met <u>your reasons</u> for attending. Please go back, and in the box to the right of question 9, <u>circle</u> one number next to each reason you ranked.

11. In addition to <u>your</u> reasons for attending, four specific goals, established by the conference planners, are listed below. Please indicate how well you think the conference achieved these goals (please <u>circle</u> one number for each goal).

	Very Well				Very Poorly	
To provide participants with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the available approaches and theories related to work with families	1	2	3	4	5	(1)
To provide opportunities for participants to understand differences between selected approaches, as well as similarities and points of integration.	1	2	3	4	5	(2)
To increase the awareness and understanding of participants of innovative field practices in work with families.	1	2	3	4	5	(3)
To develop a dialogue and increase interaction amongst practitioners, supervisors and teachers involved in family practice in Western Canada with the view of improving resource sharing and building regional competencies.	1	2	3	4	5	(4)

12. We are interested in what has happened to your practice as a result of the conference. Below are a number of possible outcomes of such a conference. Please circle the number which best reflects your agreement with these statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	
As a result of the conference I have made useful contacts with other professionals.	1	2	3	4	5	(1)
As a result of the conference I have made useful contacts with other professionals which <u>I have used already</u> in my practice.	1	2	3	4	5	(2)
As a result of the conference I have discovered new agencies or services.	1	2	3	4	5	(3)
As a result of the conference I have discovered new services or agencies which <u>I have since used</u> in my practice.	1	2	3	4	5	(4)
As a result of the conference I have significantly improved my knowledge and understanding of the principles and theories of at least one approach to family practice.	1	2	3	4	5	(5)

13. As a result of the conference I have changed my approach (tried something new, dropped an old approach, etc.) to some of the families for whom I provide service. Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

14. If you answered 'yes' to the above statement (#13), would you please share with us the nature of the change in your practice?

_____

_____

_____

15. As a result of the conference, changes have been brought about in the agency in which I work. Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

16. If you answered 'yes' to the above statement (#15) would you please share with us the nature of the change(s) in your agency?

_____

_____

_____

17. Would you recommend this conference to your colleagues? Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

18. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the conference?

_____

_____

_____

PART C. SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR WORKERS IN FAMILY PRACTICE

This section is designed to obtain a better understanding of the resources available to you to do your job, how these resources are used, and what improvement might be made.

Your careful attention and response to these questions will help us gain a clearer picture as to how these resources can best work to help you improve client services.

19. How would you describe the present number of resources that you have available to you in your community (outside your agency) in the way of special services, referrals, etc. to carry out your work with families? (Please check one)

Nonexistent	____	(1)
Inadequate	____	(2)
Adequate	____	(3)
More than Adequate	____	(4)

20. How would you describe the present quality of resources that you have available to you in your community (outside your agency) in the way of special services, referrals, etc. to carry out your work with families? (Please check one)

Inadequate	____	(1)
Adequate	____	(2)
More than Adequate	____	(3)

21. We are interested in what you think about using the family practice resources in your community (outside your agency), whatever level they may be. Please check below the statement which best reflects your view.

Because there are no resources, I simply can't use them.	___	(1)
Because I do not know what resources exist, I am unable to use them.	___	(2)
I find it difficult to use the resources even though I know they exist, because I do not know whom to contact.	___	(3)
All the resources I need are right in my agency, so I don't use outside help.	___	(4)
I already use all the resources in my community when required.	___	(5)
Although the resources exist, they are too costly to use.	___	(6)

21. cont'd

Although I know most of the resources in my community, I am unable to use them because they do not seem to be accessible. ___ (7)

Although I know most of the resources in my community, I do not use them in some areas because they do not appear to be of high enough quality. ___ (8)

If you checked the last statement, would you please comment on the perceived weaknesses of the resources which are available?

_____

_____

Are there other issues you wish to raise relating to the usefulness of resources? _____

_____

22. Do you ever feel that referrals to other agencies conflict with the interests of your own agency?

Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

If you answered yes to the above question, does this feeling ever prevent you from using other agencies?

Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

Comments _____

_____

23. I feel my present knowledge, skills and training to deal with most problems that I meet in my work with families are: (Please check one)

Excellent	___	(1)
Good	___	(2)
Sufficient	___	(3)
Poor	___	(4)
Completely Inadequate	___	(5)

Please comment on what you perceive to be your areas of weakness (if applicable).

_____

_____

24. When I meet a problem in my work with families for which I lack training, skills or knowledge, I usually (please rank order, using number one to indicate most frequent response):

Turn to my immediate supervisor	____
Turn to another colleague in my agency	____
Turn to a colleague in another agency	____
Turn to books and journals	____
Discuss at a case conference	____
Refer the client	____
Use other consultants	____
I don't meet such situations generally	____
Other (please specify) _____ _____	____

25. How satisfied are you with the resources available to you for coping with the situation described in #24 above? (Please check one)

Completely satisfied	___	(1)
Satisfied	___	(2)
Not satisfied at all	___	(3)

If you are dissatisfied with the present resources, please identify the areas in which you would like improvement:

_____

_____

_____

A suggestion has been made that some method of promoting collaboration, communications, information sharing, informal learning, and consultation amongst professionals and agencies working with families should be encouraged in each community.

26. Do you have such a method in your community?

Yes ____ (1) No ____ (2)

Comments _____

_____

_____

27. Do you think such a method has value in principle?

Yes ____ (1) No ____ (2)

Comments _____

_____

_____

28. What would you consider to be the most likely obstacles to forming such a system in your community? (Please rank order, using number 1 to indicate most likely problem.)

Requires too much structure and leadership. ____

Would take too much time and people would not participate. ____

There is too much conflict, competition or animosity amongst agencies and/or staffs to allow it to work. ____

There just would not be enough "returns" for involvement in such activities. ____

Other (please specify) _____ ____

_____

29. Would you like to have additional training and education in family work available to you?

Yes ____ (1) No ____ (2)

30. If you answered yes to #29 above, please rank those approaches to training and education which would be most valuable to you, using number 1 to indicate the most valuable.

	Rank Order
Conferences on work with families	____
On-going supervision/support by a senior member of my agency	____
Intensive "internships" where I would work in a special practice/ teaching clinic under the supervision of competent practitioners/ teachers	____
Regular and accessible seminars at various levels on various aspects of family work	____
Opportunities to read journals and books	____
In-agency staff development using outside experts for our entire staff according to the identified needs of staff	____
Regular and accessible problem-oriented seminars/workshops which focus mostly on improving my methods of practice with families - using simulations, live or video-taped demonstrations, etc.	____
Case conferences	____
University credit courses at various levels	____
A team of specialists with whom I could consult on problems, new approaches, etc.	____
Other (please specify) _____	
_____	____

31. In your view, what are the most important things needed to improve services to families in your agency? Please rank order those which apply, using number 1 to indicate the most important.

	Rank Order
Reduced case loads	_____
Organizational changes in my agency	_____
Better office space	_____
Better in-service education and staff development	_____
More and better training, workshops/seminars through colleges and universities	_____
Better financing of agency	_____
Improved accessibility of agency to client	_____
Better inter-agency cooperation, collaboration	_____
More available consultation services for special problems	_____
Other - please enter your own and rank.	
_____	_____

32. It has been suggested that some means of improving information, education and training, and encouraging improved services to families interprovincially would be very valuable in principle. Do you agree with such a suggestion?

Yes ___ (1) No ___ (2)

33. If you responded 'yes' to #32 above, please indicate how you think such a means should be initiated. (Please check one).

By appropriate Provincial Government structures	____	(1)
By the Federal Government	____	(2)
By a separate, new Western Association of Family Workers	____	(3)
By the Faculties/Schools of Social Work of the western provinces	____	(4)
By an "animateur" or organizer, funded by a variety of sources, but not responsible to any one group	____	(5)
By an existing professional association, such as Associations of psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists or nurses	____	(6)
Through a consortium of service agencies, professional associations, educational institutions in western Canada	____	(7)
Other (please specify)		
_____	____	(8)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR US.

If you wish a copy of the final report, please advise me in a separate letter.

Send to: Morris Baskett
Faculty of Continuing Education
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 1N4